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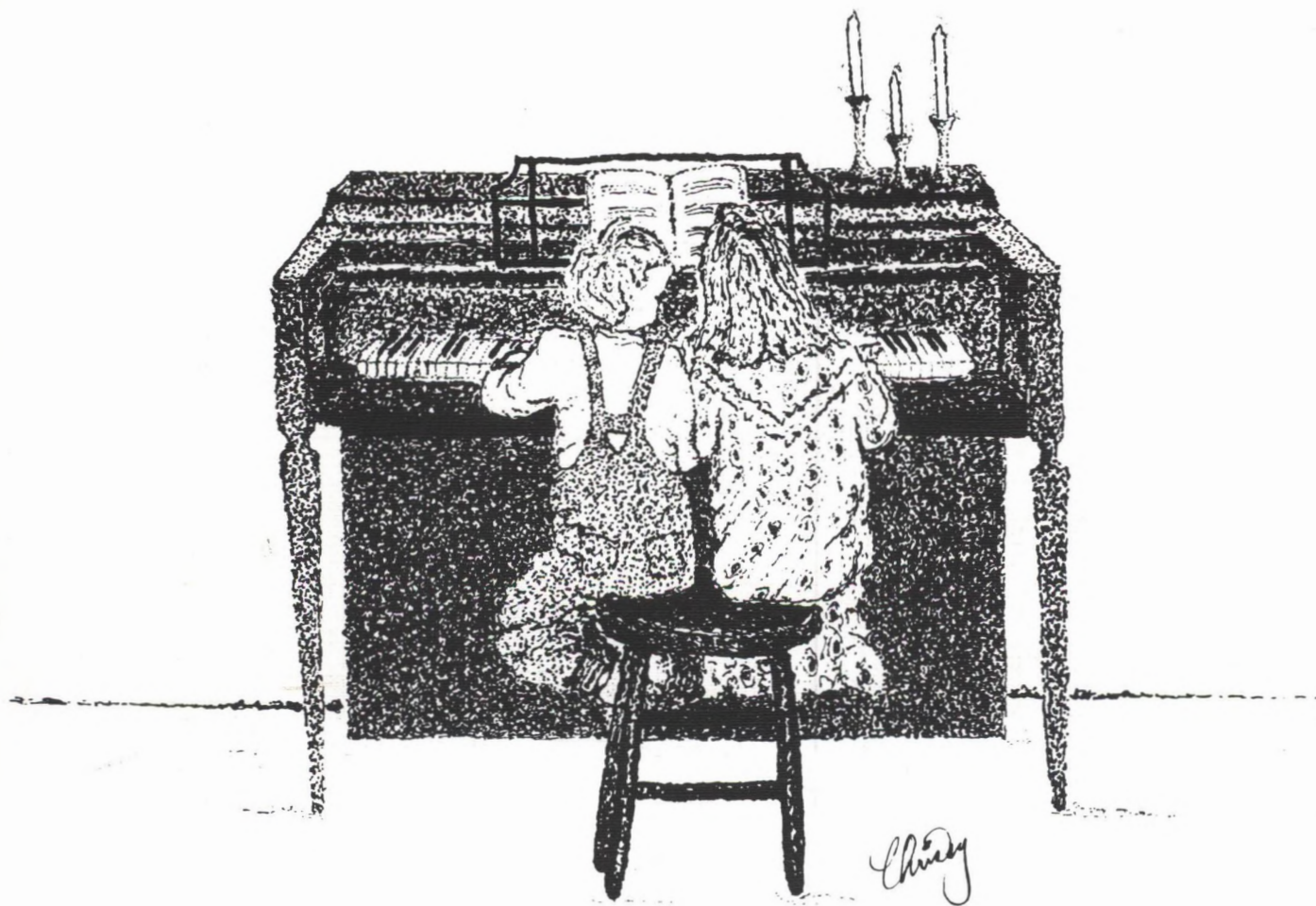
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GRIMOIRE



La Salle University
1990 Grimoire
"Magic Book"
20th Anniversary Issue

To Futch (Lauren), Viola, Jock, and Janine for love, forgiveness and imagination.

Marysa Van Patten
Editor-in-Chief



"Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it."

— Mahatma Ghandi



"Action is the last resource of those who know not how to dream."

— Oscar Wilde

Scenes from the Everyday life

She had been waiting two days for him, and the walls still said nothing. However the clock was very sarcastic; "Look what time it is. He'll never call now, it's too late. Just too late." "Shut up," she said to the clock and slunk back down in her chair. The walls were silent.

It was hard to imagine happiness although she knew in a vague sort of way what it was supposed to be. She was almost positive her time with Paul was good but one never knows. One must be careful to keep all defenses up. It is healthy to be paranoid — there are spies everywhere. Paul told her he loved her once. She was sure of that. She remembered clearly the way he had breathed it in her ear the first time they made love. She grinned when she thought of it. The fact that they had made love at all was quite a secret. She kept it hidden — no one knew.

Often she'd write it down on a piece of paper just to see it — and for it to be real. Then afterward she'd burn it just the same, to make sure no one ever knew. Paul was important and married. If they ever found out about them, he'd be ruined, and she wouldn't get those delicious sweet rolls he always brought when he came to visit.

One time she spread the icing all over his chest, like a salve, then licked it off again. He didn't like being sticky and having to waste time taking a shower, but she liked the taste. Better than the bitter soapy taste his skin had. It was like having your mouth washed out with soap when you were a kid.

"You were a terrible kid," said the chair. "You never liked me," she said. "I loved you," it said. She pretended not to hear that last part because chairs are very deceitful. You can't trust them.

She heard the people next door fighting. At first it was just a buzzing in her head, but then she could extract the conversation. At times she had supersonic hearing, but only sometimes. Next door they were arguing about what brand of spaghetti tastes better. She tried to tune them out. She didn't like spaghetti much.

Paul hadn't called yet. He was busy, though. Lately he'd been forgetting to bring the sweet rolls. It didn't seem important at first. She didn't mind. But then everytime she heard his key in the lock, she would become excited by the thought that maybe he would bring them this time. But recently he hadn't.

She looked around the room. It was a single room apartment dimly lit with only one window that faced the river. She kept it clean and was proud of that. It was dark now, but she could make out the shapes of things around her. A refrigerator, a stove, a small table — the barest of necessities.

She lit a cigarette and let the match burn down to her fingers until it sizzled out. It was a neat trick — she didn't feel it. She often thought she would never burn if she were in a fire. She simply wasn't flammable.

Paul didn't smoke, and he asked her not to when he was around. He wasn't there, so she puffed away, watching the smoke drift.

She was going to break it off with Paul she decided. She didn't like the fact that he didn't smoke and wouldn't let her. She wanted someone who would remember sweet rolls. Her mind made up, she practiced her speech before he called.

"I can't go on like this anymore. I deserve more respect. I want someone to care about me all the time not just when he's not busy. I thought I might have loved you."

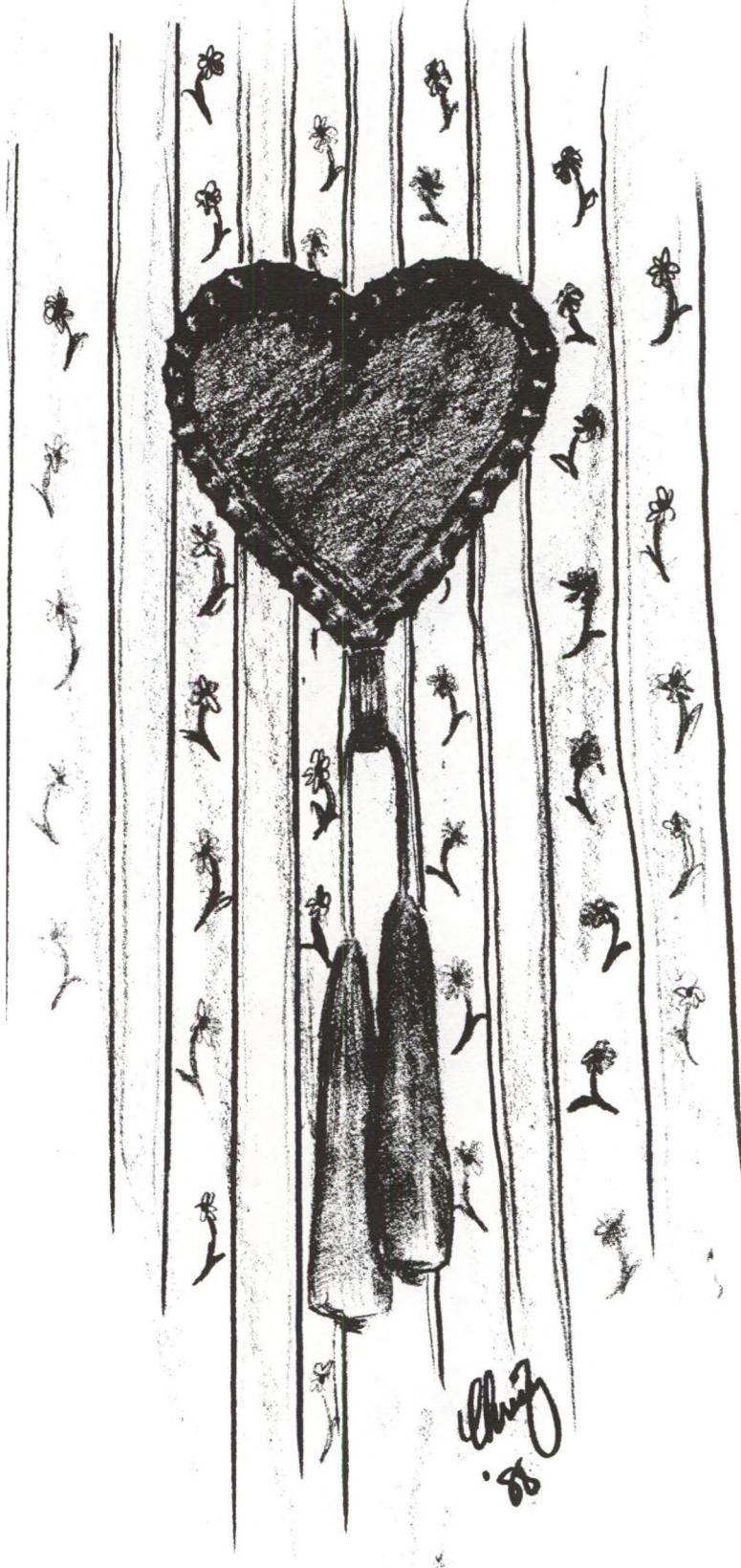
"I never loved you. You were just a toy for me. I love myself too much to love anyone," the walls said. And she knew they were speaking the truth, but she denied them anyway.

"Don't leave," she whispered to them, but they were silent again. They had spoken their peace.

She looked at the clock and the chair; they were silent, too. She butted her cigarette and took a drink from the glass on the table.

"Ain't life a beach," it said.

"Shut up," she said, — and closed her eyes and waited.



Love's Light Cometh

Oh love's light cometh every night;
Soft whispers of night air
Kiss with such delight.

Silently I lay in prayer,
Ponder upon moon's light,
And ask myself:

"Oh where are your lips?"
My love's alive,
Yet I feel no fingertips

Rushing through black hair.
Oh love's light cometh every night.

— M. G. van Veen

Loving someone is like writing his name on a frosted
windowpane on a cold rainy day.

The writing is clear and solid, but only for a moment.

Then it begins to drip and fade away,
becoming distorted, until it is unrecognizable.

It finally disappears, on its own, or wiped away
by an angry hand.

But the frost soon returns, always ready to be
written on again.

With either his name or another's.
And the cycle begins again.

— Allison Anne Auld



— Beth McSherry

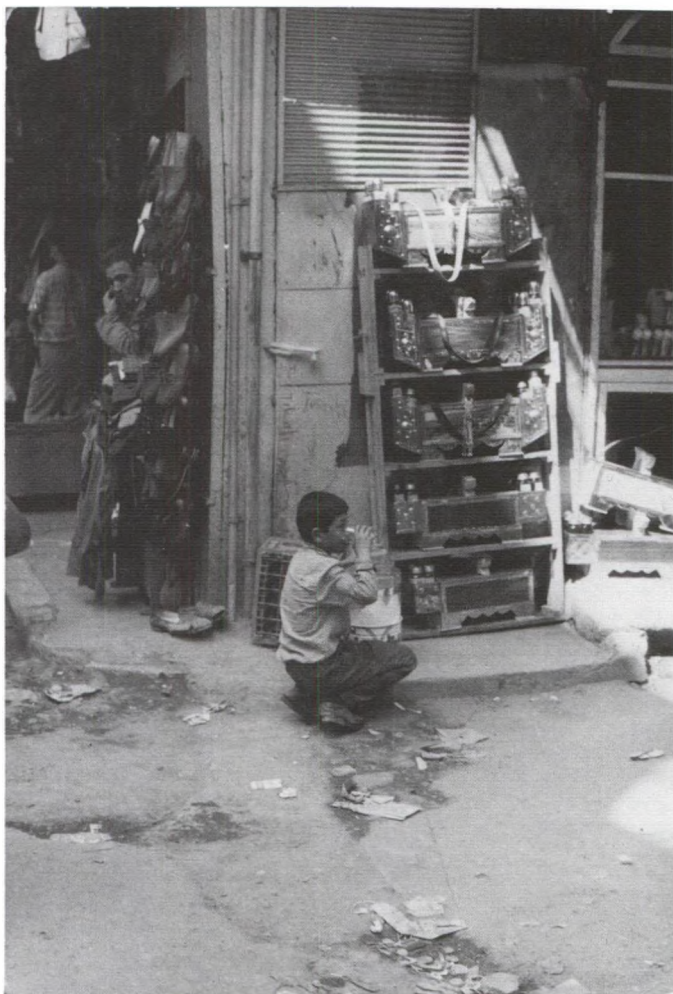
A Painting by a Child From a Divorced Family

Before the flood, on a hill
Noah's ark was in view.
On line to enter his ark
all the saved animals
paired off, two by two.

Behind them one species lingered,
female to the far left corner,
male to the right.
Black clouds hung in warning.

Because the people
learned a bit too late
what Noah always knew,
the tiny hand painted rain,
on the procession of two by two.

— Marysa Van Patten



— Virma Ugras



— Virma Ugras



Ode to the Cigarette

1

O, dear dozen and eight in box!
How jovial my discontented heart sang
When I lit you among Dover's rocks:

There, clouds of murky misery above
Did not dare separate, nor part
To let in that lonesome crying dove;

Wind raged fierily all around,
Harsh and unfair whispers
Did not permit a glad song's sound;

And past my feet down below,
Wild wanton waters of England's channel
Gave somber sight for my misery to grow.

O, dear dozen and eight in box,
How smoke lifted my barren heart!

2

O, within me, you reside for a while —
Like the holy of holiest, the spirit
Lest my heart run a mile

Through heavenly green pastures,
Where I'd been with infant's joy
Devoid and free from her curse.

O irony!, cigars did not she mind —
Her old Pappa in his time
Lit many Cuban and other kind;

Yet, cigarettes did not she stand —
Cussing your tangy aroma,
Insisting I'd spent a wasted rand.

I am among Dover's rocks —
Happy content there.

3

O, one by one, did my lungs consume,
Filling the burning empty heart inside.
As I stood in this wilderness of gloom

Thoughts of dread about the row
She and I participated in
Did not persist lingering now.

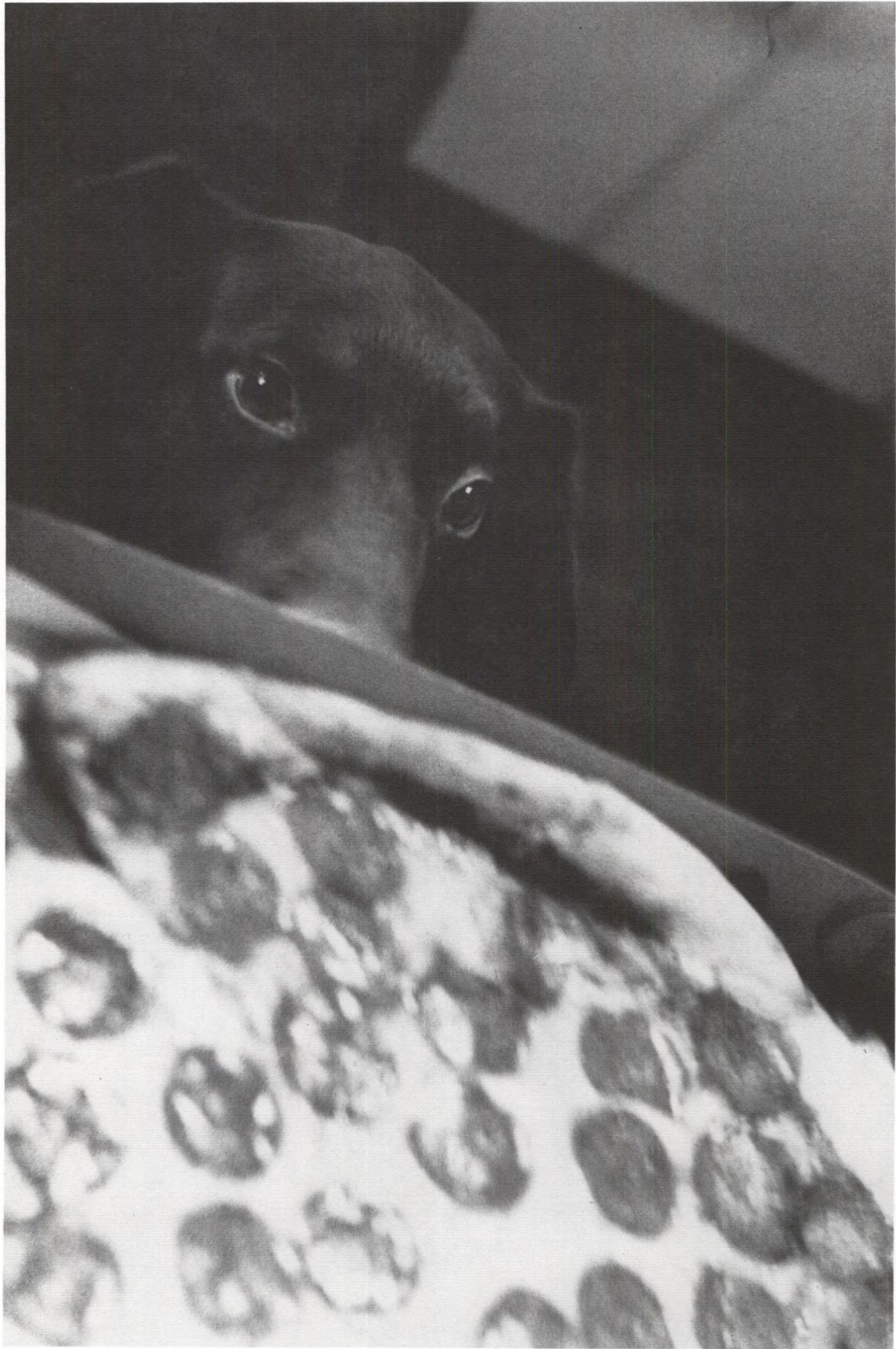
O, I found you that first day
While a boy unknowing worldly things;
Friend gave me you, and I came your way

To submerge in your mist, away from reason
To conquer vast lands, forgotten fantasy,
Where my innocence had Spring as season.

Where'd I have stood
In her health-conscious land?

— M. G. van Veen





Roethke Assignment

Biting into the rich apple
I taste its cool juice and believe
I sit in paradise. Beneath
the cool shade of the tamarack
on a thick, muggy, hot summer
afternoon, we have our picnic.

"Let's go down to the rope swing by
the lake," I say. Perched upon a
rock we watch a lonely frog play
in the soft mud. Surprised by the
crash of thunder in the sky, we
kiss just the same, and wish for more time.

Heavy, dark clouds bruise the crisp blue
day emptying its sharp, frozen
tears about us. Though surprised, I
sit as my soaked shirt clings to my
skin and I shiver. In the hue of
the storm I stare into her blue eyes.

— Craig Borchardt

Railing

Flowers by the railing
She held desperate
Almost crying.
Trying to, but failing
To explain, though words were falling
From his mouth
As they had always
Laughed about in secret
With faces pressed on pillow
They had shared when world was simpler.

'Can't you just now hold me'
Her lips, licked wet
Had whispered.
But flowers somehow faded
As she held them by the railing.
And this strength,
Which they had always
Relied upon was waning.
So this gesture, once of love, was
Simply iris on a grave.

— Christopher Davis

On The Return

The sun lifted its beaming grace
Past the ragged horizon.
Lighting the clouds,
Glossing the rooftops,
Delivering dawn to
A place earlier dark.
My heart roused
From numb sleep
For each time
The sun drifted heavenward,
You
Were one day closer.

— Michael Kmiec

A Mother Goose Nightmare





Fires

The light, cold rain fell twisting to the street in misty veils where tire treads hissed with a sizzle that cooled instantly. It was gray, early November and Skyler McCloud slipped into the foul and dripping dawn like so much lukewarm broth.

He sat in his ancient, aqua Volkswagen, engine idling, and contemplated the sugar cube a while longer. Well, why not? It would only take twenty minutes or so to navigate the Expressway and the first vibrations would not emanate from the drug for twice that long. He certainly did not want to wallow like a crouton in this soup all day, so why not sweeten it, as it were, with this little lump?

He popped the cube in his mouth without ceremony and felt a warm flush ripple through him that had nothing to do with chemicals. He jammed the Bug's groaning transmission into gear under his first smile of the day and sliced through the raw murk.

McCloud parked on the roof of the garage overlooking the campus and, since he had the time, rolled down the windows (to better hear the stereo) and unfolded himself from the car to lean on the peeling metal rail to watch.

The early-class people were arriving in dribs and drabs, scurrying through the fine mist that was not quite rain, not quite fog, seeking sanctuary from the whims of a storm that seemed to have been lurking forever.

McCloud flicked a bit of blue paint from the rail and watched it drift out of sight towards the ground before raising his eyes to take in the campus again. It squatted rather than loomed, any urge to sprawl barred by measures of hungry parking meters, a sort of steady counterpoint to the cacophony of edges joining each building in juxtaposition with the next. All ninety degree angles had been eliminated. It was a monument to HabiTrail Architecture.

McCloud only half-noticed the clattering chocolate-brown Camaro as it pulled into a space near his, and if the girl had not called out to him he would never have seen her.

"Nice day, huh?" she said, slamming the car door, juggling her pocketbook, bag of texts and a hot pink umbrella in a flurry of movement. She was small and darkly exotic, vaguely Polynesian, her bottled blonde hair in careful disarray, her lips a sticky crimson.

"For a funeral," he replied.

"Oh, come on. It's only weather," she said, gliding over, balancing her bundles and sprouting her umbrella along the way. "Want to get under?" she asked, with a childlike tilt of her head. Skyler noticed two viciously purple hickeys on her slender throat.

"The last person who asked me that I almost married."

"Don't say that word. Do you want to get under or not?"

"It's hardly worth it."

"Oh," she said.

They stood there a while, the two of them, Skyler staring fixedly, Melanie stifling a yawn.

"I'm tired," she said. "I had to work until two and then I had to get up early to pick up my mother so she could watch my son today 'cause he's too sick to go to day care."

"Which job did you work last night?" asked Skyler, not taking his eyes from the scene before him.

"Both. I did surveys until nine and then I did half a shift at 7-11."

"That's nasty."

"Yeah. But it will be different when I get my degree. You know, get one decent paying job, work normal hours."

He turned to look at Melanie and realized that the drug had taken hold. She was shrouded in the image of the school retained by his drug-addled brain. Slowly, the ghostly image faded from his retinas and he gave her a fine smile.

"We should get to class," she said.

"Yes, class," he replied distractedly, for Skyler was engrossed in the buildings again, which were not quite buildings anymore, but a huge HabiTrail with several thousand breathlessly scampering gerbils scurrying up and down treadmill escalators, weaving through maze-like connecting tubes.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Melanie asked, sounding like someone's mother.

"What?"

She nodded at the battered Volkswagen, windows down, stereo blasting. "Oh, yeah, I gotta get a grip," he said, more to himself than to Melanie.

Skyler began clawing about the VW, turning off the stereo, securing windows and doors but forgetting to shut off the lights and, while searching for the switch, forgetting what in hell he was looking for. He grabbed his notebook and burned his hand on its red cover and dropped it with a small surprised sound that bounced around the passenger compartment. He stifled a giggle which only made him giggle more. Hesitating, he carefully picked up the notebook again, the cold red cover tickling his fingers not at all. He knew he was forgetting something so he pulled the tape from the cassette player for closer examination. It was a good tape. He noticed the lights were on and tossed his notebook on the passenger seat, scattering loose pages and handouts. He gathered them, giggling again, shoved them haphazardly back in the notebook and climbed out of the car, locking the door.

"Your lights are on, Skyler," said Melanie.

"Oh, yeah, that's it," he said, remembering the switch on the dash. Finally he shut the door and walked towards the elevator with Melanie. The driver's side door was still unlocked.

"Feeling confused, Skyler?"

"What gives you that idea?"

"Nothing in particular. You just seem a little jumpy today, that's all."

"Not me," said Skyler, pushing the button for the garage elevator.

"You can't be serious," she said. "Come on, Skyler, it's only four flights. Hike it, you lazy lump." Her voice was lilting, playful.

He thought about the confines of the little metal box, the spaghetti-thin cable that suspended it in the dark, cold shaft that plunged who knew how deep into the earth and felt the beginnings of a paranoid fit of claustrophobic psychosis. "Good idea," he said. "I'd hate to have to chew my way out between floors." He drew his tongue along the back of his teeth, knowing they weren't sharp enough for that job. He suppressed a giggle that forced its way out as a snort.

They walked briskly toward the gray buildings that melted into the leaden sky. McCloud was a bit nervous about going into the place, not sure if he could handle it. But Melanie's voice was dancing warmly about him and even though he couldn't quite focus on the words, the singsong rhythm eased him somewhat.

"You know what this place needs?" he said, interrupting. "It needs ivy growing up all over the walls. It likes this sort of dripping weather, ivy. Big green splashes of the shit all over the place."

"That's no good. All that stuff does is eat the mortar from between the bricks. It's not worth it; I mean, what would it add? Besides, it wouldn't look right; it wouldn't fit in."

They were stopped at the entrance by security who demanded to see positive proof of enrollment. Melanie was quick with hers, but Skyler was fumbling through his wallet, paws unable to work properly. He caught his fur in the bill fold; and because his thumb had gone somewhere he dropped the wallet. He put his notebook under his arm and clawed at his stranded wallet with both paws and he had the sudden urge to bury himself in wood shavings for

the rest of the morning.

He faintly heard a voice call to Melanie and he heard the two talking miles away from him. Class cancelled; he could hear it all clearly in spite of the great distance.

"Do you believe that?" she said after the other voice drifted away. "I could be asleep now."

"It's O.K. by me. I didn't do the assignment."

"Well, I did. Last night, after work. Oh, well, do you want to go sit in the cafeteria for a while?"

"Sure," he said, shaking his head because it made his scalp tingle.

They found an empty table by a window. Although many of the students had a faint gerbilian cast, a few did not, especially Melanie.

"You know, this annoys the hell out of me. We should get refunds or something for cancelled classes. Money ain't easy to come by, unless you're rich," she said, wandering through her wallet. "I work two jobs so I can pay for school, day care, car insurance and every other bill. Then there's school work." She stopped at a picture of a small child. "You know, I'm doing all this so my kid won't have to. I think I owe him that much. But you know, I wonder if I'm being a good mother, you know, if I could do more. I mean I'm hardly ever there, or at least it seems that way. What kind of person is he gonna think I am?"

There was an awkward silence between them.

"What about financial aid?" managed Skyler.

"I make too much money. Ain't that a joke."

"Lie then."

She hesitated, looking at the picture. "No, I can't," she said, pulling out a dollar and snapping the wallet closed. "Well, it will all be different once I get my degree."

Skyler nodded and looked out the window. The rain on the glass beaded into diamonds, gifts from the storm that glistened with cold rainbow fire. He wanted to gather them in his hands, feel their frosty heat. But he knew they were on the outside and if he tried to get to them by the nearest door, an emergency exit, he would set off alarms.

"You know, I should go up to the library and work on my research paper," said Melanie.

"Why don't you. I may go home."

"Well," she said, gathering her belongings, "if you do I'll see you on Friday."

Skyler watched Melanie walk swiftly away, leaving a trail of St. Elmo's Fire behind her. It wasn't fair she had to work so hard. But there was nothing he could do — not really. His hands (he looked down quickly and yes, they were still paws, god damn it!) His paws were tied. How much can you do without thumbs?

He looked out the window again at the clinging diamond drops so sinfully seductive. It was maddening to watch them. Looking through the glass they were the only temptation set before the gray sky.

Then he saw the fluttering licks of Melanie's fire float to the window and stroke the glass affectionately. It was a sensual and alluring motion. They stroked the glass finger-like on one side while the glittering diamond drops clung to the other unmoved and unmoving until the last remnants of Melanie's fire faded against the cold glass and died.

Skyler realized he had stopped breathing while he watched. And the diamonds sat on the glass so real and unaffected, he could almost hear them sing like spoiled children in mocking haughty voices.

Slowly, Skyler felt righteous indignation welling up in him and he knew then what he had to do.

He grabbed his notebook and fled from the cafeteria, careful not to run. He slipped past the guard easily — the fool didn't even try to stop him — and Skyler McCloud was free, free to deliver his sermon.

He took the steps two at a time to the roof of the parking garage. Once there he tossed his notebook onto the roof of his car and walked to the railing of his four story pulpit and confronted the glazed, vacant eyes of the buildings before him, the press of the heavy sky above.

Skyler looked down at the spongy ground that was undulating softly. The huge tinted eyes bulging from the HabiTrail stared mute and frozen over the contour of the grade, unseeing. As Skyler watched, one particular pool of warm, brown mud began to lose its battle with the force of gravity and trickle into a tiny river, winding and gurgling and ultimately alone.

He wanted to say something about sacrifice and love, to place everything into proper perspective in relationship to everything else. He wanted to say something about hope and life and futility and something about giving a damn, about feeling, about feeling anything at all.

The huge tinted eyes glistened in the distance. He could see that the wet diamonds were refracting, mocking, and waiting. Waiting for Skyler McCloud. Sitting opulently and waiting.

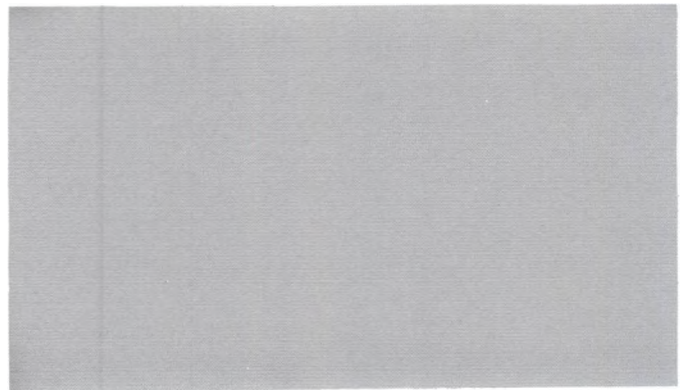
He gripped the wet metal rail. It was cold and blue. He groped for words to throw across the expanse against the far-away naked walls. He stood like that for a long while, until his hands went numb with cold and the force he was exerting to maintain his grip.

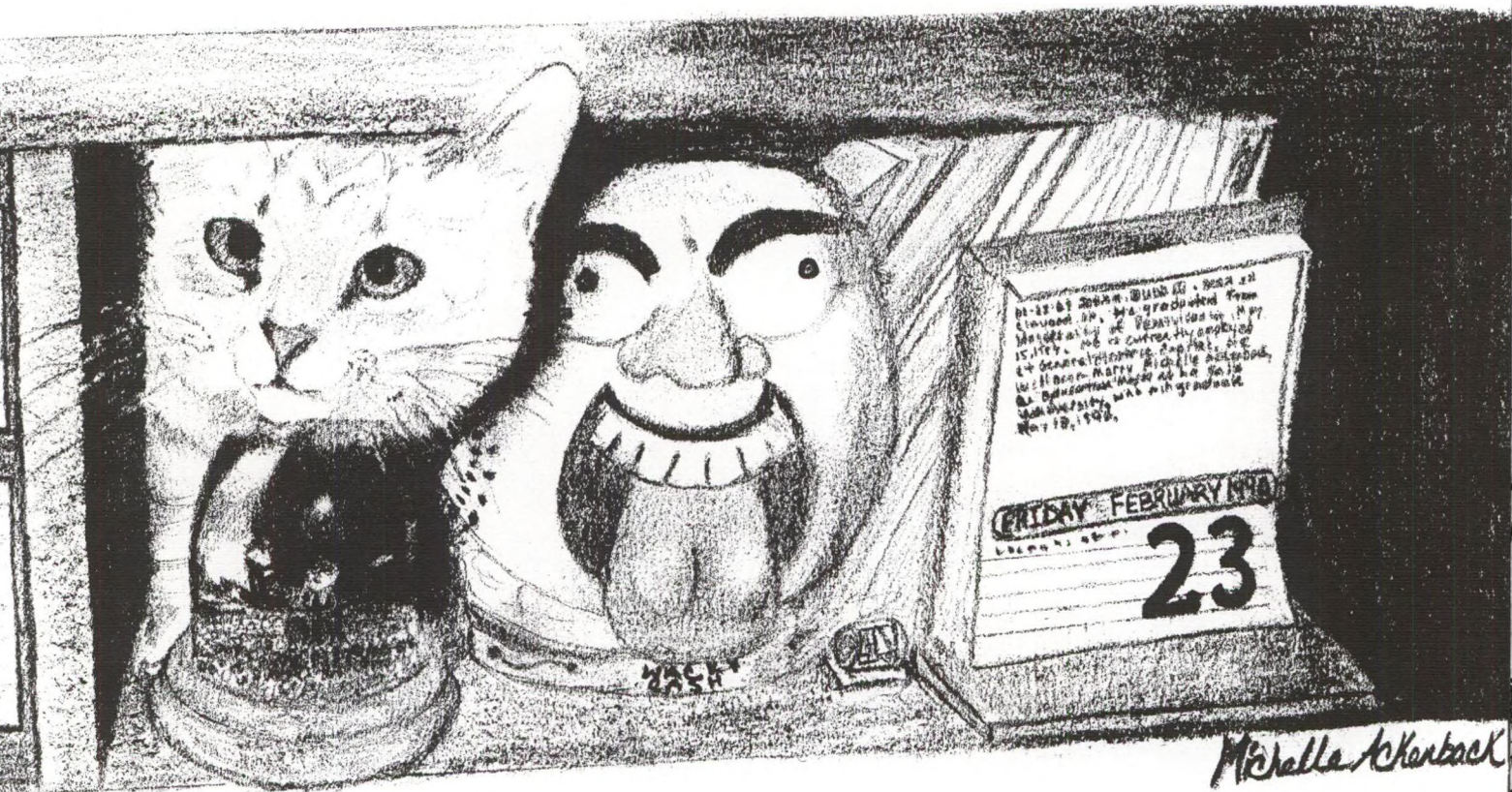
Quietly, the vast, gray sky slipped into his jacket and between the buttons of his shirt as he struggled for what to say.

And so Skyler McCloud's sermon, like many things in his life, went unspoken, his passions a smouldering pyre in the mist.

After a time he got into his car and slipped a tape into the stereo, something new from an old band, and hummed along, while on the roof of his car his notebook sopped up raw, misty rain that had fallen all morning.

— Pete Kimchuk





M.XII

The cat, attracted by its inborn
Curiosity,
Bats its paws
At the movements of the pen.
Eyes wide, she intrigues herself
With movement.
This won't kill her,
But it will keep her busy.
(For a moment.)

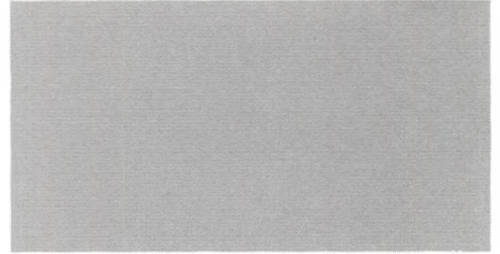
— Michael Kmiec



Whale

He, all steel and iron, said to her,
"Will you love me now?"
And what precipitated this question
Was an evening, during which
He taught her his method. And
What gave rise to her response was not
His expanse of chest or surety of gesture
When he removed his shirt;
Not the range of motion or execution of design
Of his shoulders as he pressed against iron;
Not the strength itself but more so the
Intensity and translation of desire
Into the locomotion of steel; the appeal
Of his hands to her ribs for support
As she tried her interpretation
Of ambition into energy, of his resistance
To her legs as he taught her to strengthen
Her thigh, of his massage of the tissue that
Tightened and knotted from lack of use but
Most of all it was the words he spoke to her
As she felt the stiffness and accuracy
Of her movements, the consistent
Pleasure and pain of joints working as joints,
Of tendons pulling and relaxing, the preternatural
Anticipation of muscle unifying her body,
The invigoration he referred to as
The end of the world — an aberration
Of the Christian notion of body joining soul
At the end of time in perfect repose,
The final meeting of function and design. And
As she heaved her chest, exhaled, and let down
The weight, she looked into his eyes
As he gently wiped the sweat from her breast,
And saw his dedication, fruition and their potential
For constant motion — two pendulums propelling
Each other into higher, more sound arcs.
Her response opened its colossal maw,
Engulfed them in the darkness of joy,
Sprayed them with enzyme and
Broke them down; spat them out whole.

— Thomas A. Ipri



Sugar

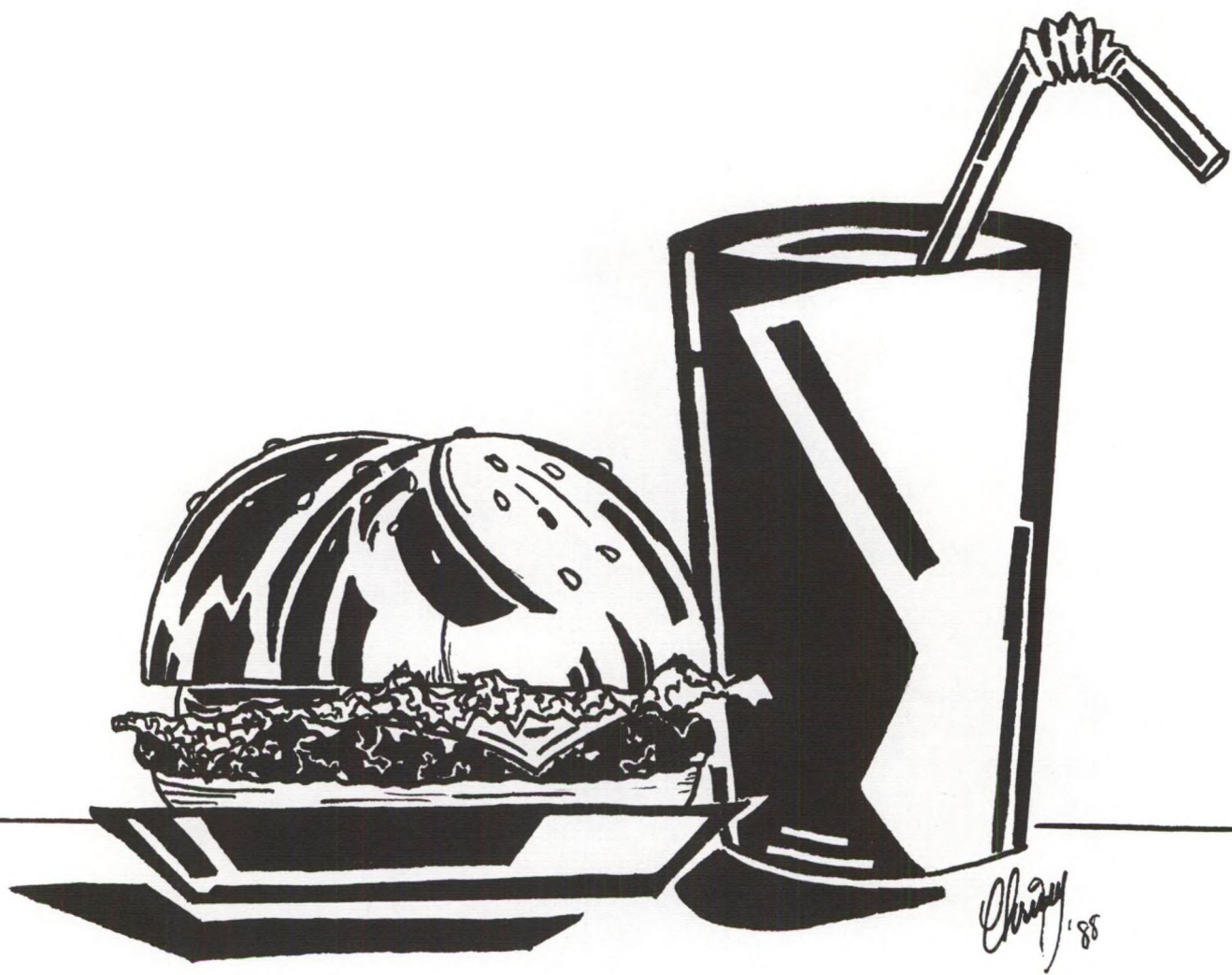
Don't need the sweet
apple raisin pie,
nor dry land's
dull grainy sand:
I'm Sugar.

Ships float on sea
beneath a wet sky,
while birdies fly
when fishies swim
in sailor's salt.
Red roses wilde in field
barley wheat grain,
blown hacked — no complain
down for breakfast's lovers
love taken out rain's,
nature's pestilent game.

Don't need the warm
cold liquid refreshments,
nor fruits falling off trees'
caterpillar chewed of holes:
I'm Sugar;
You need me!

— M. G. van Veen





— Chrissy Rocklage

Let Me Put These In Some Water

Surrounded by night, the lifelike bodies lie
Entwined in a tangle of sheets; their careless
Clothes asleep, speechless on the bare wood floor.
One set of hands are tucked under a pillow;
The other clenched at the edge of the bed.

He had given her cunning words and harmless pretense.
"The game is charades," — he stretches and yawns —
"The lover's parade" — he quietly returns
to his shirt and tie,
"Moves from town to town, home to home, bed to bed;
The same jokes at the feet of a different audience
Never die," — he smiles and scratches his head.
And as he cracks his neck he sees the day has yet to dawn.

"Let me put these in some water," she said the night before
After he had bought her dinner and stolen her a rose,
When he had spoken to her sweetly and they had danced.
She mistook what he gave her the flowers for; thought that
His smile was for love, his affection and his words
for romance.

In the morning she leaves her eyes closed
And reaches for his warm hand — the one that she would keep —
But feels only the warm sunlight
Shining on the wrinkled sheets.

So the lovers lie
And she sees roses fall to the floor;
Petals can never reach back to the sore
Stems...(stems from her downcast heart
silent like children's secret pacts,
cold like the chill on winter trees,
empty like the snore of a broken sax,
lost like passion in the hands of a priest.)

She lost her love to a ravenous beast.

— Thomas A. Ipri



— Regina Jakubauskas

In Another Place

Meet your eyes, blue against the red of your face.
I'm not supposed to care, I'm not supposed to care.
Hear your laugh, so different, warming deep down in me.
I'm not supposed to care, and I'm not supposed to care.
In another place, in another time, not supposed to happen.
But if in another place
Where I am stronger, and able to hold onto my will,
I would care, forever, and not worry.
I'm not supposed to think about that.
I'm not supposed to think about that.
And no one lives in any other place
but here.

— Duane Swierczynski



— Regina Jakubauskas

Green Gown

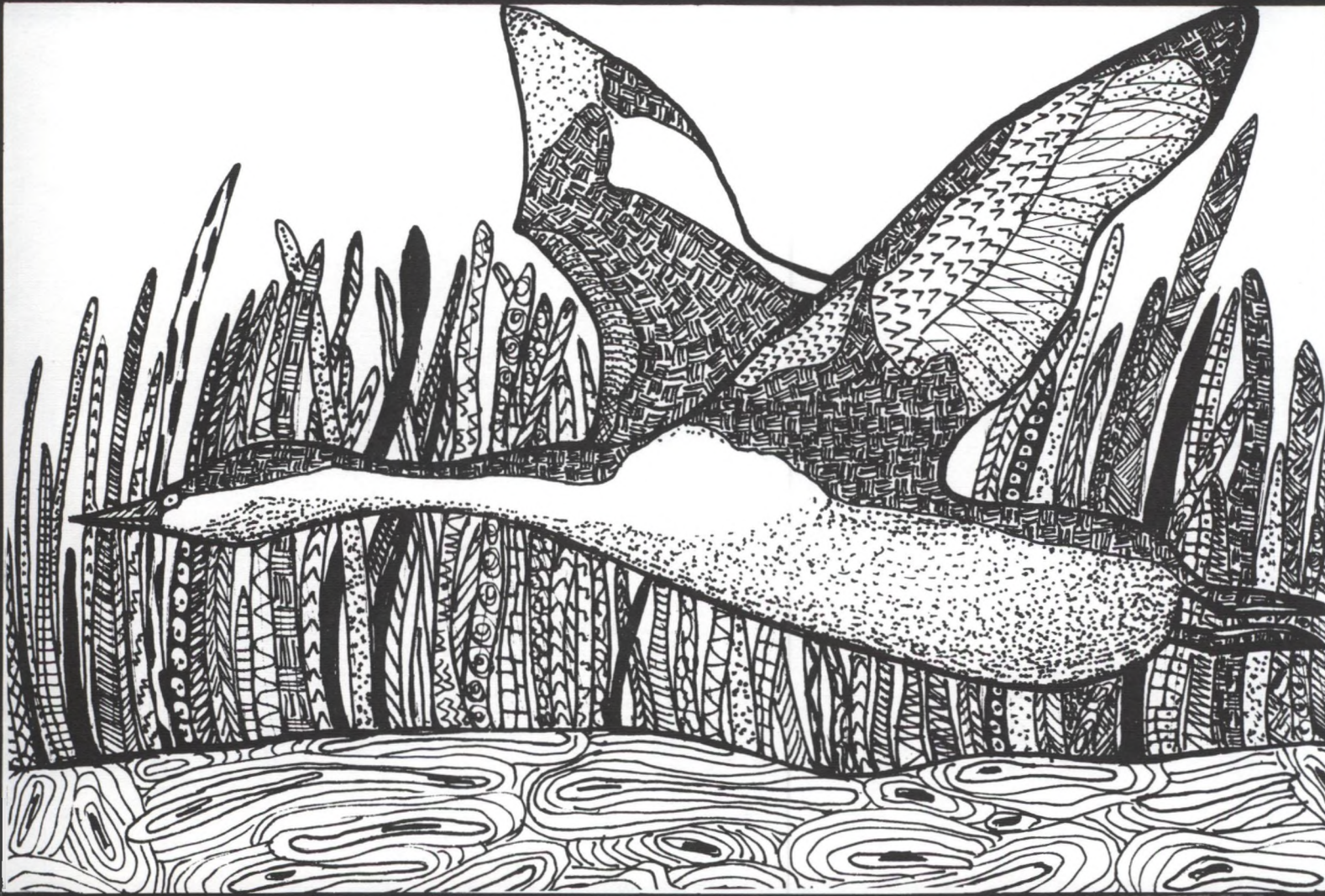
Give a green gown
When winter's lips are kissed and washed into
Warmer weather.
Fall down
Where the grass is wet and full of tangled weeds.
Take this rain cloud.
Wear it and the folds will form a blanket.
Change the stained sheets
That drape a dozing lover as a shroud.
When the morning sun bleeds light to leaves
All will make a green gown glow.
And the smear of leafy blades can't help but show
Humility
Woven in a green gown.

— Christopher Davis

The Tree People

Wet leaves that stick to my feet
always remind me that I, too,
am a part of nature. They get
as wet when it rains as I do.
It makes me feel a bond with them,
these bloated bodies. Then they dry
out and blow away and I don't see
them for awhile, like my other
friends. But they never cry on my shoulder
when they're down. Yet for some
mystic, cosmic reason, I feel a
sense of loss when I see one fall
from a tree, drift down to the
ground and lay there dead,
waiting for the rain.

— Dan Flannery



— Diane Brady



— Shannon Conrad



— Shannon Conrad

Excerpt from SAPIAN, a book by M. G. van Veen:

— Epilogue —



SAPIAN was perfect but ugly.

PATRONS

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James A. Butler
Barbara H. Craig
Robert T. Fallon
Mary F. Fox
Howard C. Hannum
Cary Holladay
La Salle University Art Museum
David P. McShane
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